484

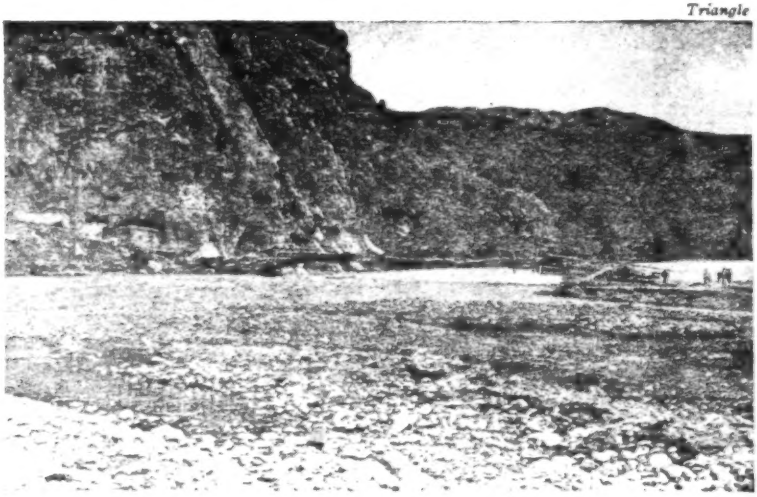
Lattimore

Travellers must often ford the Tekes and other rivers when the spring thaws come and there is no bridge.

Cantilever bridge across the Tekes River. Deep and swift-flowing mountain streams such as the Tekes makes travelling dangerous as well as difficult.

491

Triangle



[p. 32 (D)]

484

Lattimore

363

Travellers come into Yarkand at a fast trot.

Lattimore

But life moves more slowly in the city itself.

[p. 32 (H)]

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

574 D. (to me): Twenty-five.
I (to Nadir Beg): *Bist o panj.*
NADIR BEG (to Adjutant): *Zhigima-besh.*
ADJUTANT (to Amban) Twenty-five (whatever it is in Chinese!)

Next question, by the same route, from the Amban: "How is it that whereas, owing to the intense cold of this barbarous country, we and our subjects wear quantities of clothes right up to the chin, the Tai-tai wears nothing but a skirt and a closely-fitting garment cut low at the neck?" Sensation on arrival of this question! After some deliberation we concoct a suitable reply, to the effect that the country from which the Tai-tai comes, Scotland, is intensely cold, far colder than the Chinese Pamirs, and that this country seems quite hot to her—hence the scantiness of her attire!

After tea D. visited the wives of the O.C. Garrison and the Adjutant. She told me afterwards that both were Tajiks and the Adjutant's wife very pretty. After the visit at their house the ladies came back with D. to her room, and D. had to show them her dresses and keep them amused till a quarter past eight, when they finally departed.

●484 563 The last lap of our long trek, from Tashqurghan to Kashgar by the Chichiklik route, was in many ways the most interesting of all. We slept each night in Kirghiz tents which had been collected for us by the Beg of the neighbourhood; this was arranged each day, in the Tashqurghan district, by an excellent Tajik orderly or *yayieh* sent with us by the Magistrate of Tashqurghan. Our transport was similarly arranged, ponies, yaks, camels or donkeys according to what was available. As soon as we entered the Yangi Hissar district an orderly from the Amban of that place met us and performed similar services. A tower of strength to the party was Nadir Beg, already mentioned as having met us at the Mintaka, who looked after us in a most fatherly manner and to whom we took a great liking. A tall, handsome, black-bearded, cheerful, energetic man of about forty, a good horseman and hard as nails, Nadir is a splendid specimen of the Tajik race; he is particularly useful on the march in Sariqol, for he seems to have known every one of the people, Tajiks and Kirghiz alike, from 522 their childhood up. He also has a strong sense of humour. I shall never forget the glee with which he told us what his small son had said to him on seeing Gerard Price wearing an oiled-silk waterproof cover over his sun-helmet. "Daddy,"

439 Hissar, Karghalik and elsewhere. Besides these there are colonies of Muhammadan British subjects in nearly all the districts, some of them purely agricultural immigrants from Northern Kashmir and Chitral, others (and these among the wealthiest in the land) merchants engaged in the Indian trade. Many of the latter have married Turki wives, own land and houses, and have a considerable stake in the country. 648 All these people cling tenaciously to their British nationality and their right to the protection of the Consular court, which 692 under the existing arrangement exercises extra-territorial jurisdiction over them. This is not the place to discuss the ins and outs of the extra-territorial system in general or the details of its application to Kashgaria. Suffice it to say that the Consul-General is kept very busy maintaining order among the British subjects of the various districts, settling their civil disputes, trying cases brought against them by Chinese subjects, helping them to obtain redress in the Chinese courts and generally watching over their interests. Although theoretically the Consul-General deals only with the Taoyin, the representative of the Governor of the province, in practice very few cases, and those only the most important ones of an "international" nature, are heard at Kashgar. The Consul-General works informally with the District Magistrates, either directly or through the British agents ("Aqsaqals") in the various towns. As the majority of the British subjects live from five to twenty marches from Kashgar, it can readily be understood that the most effective and expeditious method of dealing with their cases is regularly to visit the districts in which they reside and settle matters on the spot, either with the District Magistrates or among the British subjects themselves as the case may be. In fact, it was only by travelling once a year down each of the two main roads, Yarkand-Khotan-Keriya and Maralbashi-Aksu-Kucha, with halts varying from one to fifteen days at each district headquarters and with an occasional extra visit to the chief centre of the Indian trade, Yarkand, that I found it possible to keep in touch with the Indian colonies and (what is no less important) on friendly personal terms with the • 484 Chinese magistrates. Nearly half of the two and a quarter years we were in Kashgaria was thus spent on tour, and D. and I covered, apart from holiday jaunts to the hills, some 3,400 miles, almost entirely on horseback with our baggage in Peking carts or on the back of pack-ponies. There was

1 [INDIAN MERCHANTS -- ANALYST]

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

no difficulty or hardship about any of these journeys among the oases of the plains, for, apart from being looked after very well by our own people, we were not only assisted and escorted everywhere we went by the local authorities, but actually treated as guests, having frequently the utmost difficulty in getting payment accepted for the loads of flour, vegetables, rice, fruit, fodder for horses, etc., which met us at every town. Either the Chinese official rest-house or a private residence was placed at our disposal at most stages, though in the larger centres the Aqsaqal or some other influential British subject usually insisted on putting us up. Escorts were provided everywhere, whether we wanted them or not; the troops, at any rate down the Khotan road, were invariably turned out in our honour. Last but not least, at every town we visited except two or three in the remoter northern districts, the officials not only came out to meet us and to see us off with the peculiar roadside tea-drinkings which are *de rigueur* on these occasions, but also gave special dinner-parties in our honour. As will be seen later, these attentions were sometimes rather embarrassing than otherwise, but one could not help appreciating the goodwill that prompted them. Altogether, the friendliness and courtesy with which we were received practically everywhere by the Chinese authorities were most cheering, and testified eloquently to the popularity and respect gained for the British Consulate-General by its founder, Sir George Macartney, as a result of twenty-eight years of able and single-minded service.

Life at Kashgar itself was physically less strenuous than on tour, when work and long marches had to be combined, but I was always kept very busy, especially after I was deprived in July, 1923, of the valuable assistance of the Vice-Consul, Mr. Harding, whose post was afterwards left vacant. The number of different languages in which we carried on our work indicates the variety and interest of our daily routine. On any one of our files there might be, and often were, papers in six different languages: English, Chinese, Turki, Persian, Urdu and Russian. As for the "spoken word," Turki, Urdu and Persian were all in regular use with visitors, litigants and witnesses during office hours. Some of the more cosmopolitan of my friends, indeed, used all these three languages in the same conversation, switching from one to the other in a most disconcerting manner. The Consulate staff, whom I must now introduce, were as follows: the Mir Munshi (Head

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

Khotan, 28th November.

The name of Stein is well remembered in these parts among Turkis and British subjects alike, and all antiquities other than gold brought in by the "Taklamanchis" or treasure-seekers of the Takla Makan are regarded as his property and to be kept for him. I heard many stories about the great explorer; how in the dreaded Qarangghu Tagh or "Dark Mountains" south of Khotan he bridged an abyss with wire and thus pulled himself and his party across; how in the same mountains he was laid up with frost-bite and would have perished if help had not been obtained from the Leh road, and so on. One episode, probably trivial enough if it occurred, appears to have particularly impressed the Khotanis. It is related that a domed tomb was discovered by Stein completely buried in sand, only one small aperture giving access. This was too small for Stein himself to enter, so he called for volunteers, but none of his local men dared to go in. Finally the Indian surveyor, Ram Singh, stepped (literally) into the breach. He squeezed himself in, and when he came out again some time later he was blind!

Our journey from Khotan to Keriya and back was of the nature of a dash on business, and my letters contain little of interest to the general reader. The second time we visited this remote part of the world, in the spring of 1924, we were able to spare some time for seeing the country and studying its people; on this occasion we travelled straight to Keriya (103 miles) in four marches, stayed there three days and returned to Khotan in another four days. We used pony transport for this trip, the desert road being too sandy for carts. We marched the first day 35 miles to a lonely desert inn called Beshtoghraq Langar, or "The Inn of the Five Desert Poplars," passing, twenty miles from Khotan, through the headquarters of the flourishing new district of Lop.

The Inn of the Five Desert Poplars proved a grubby, desolate little collection of mud hovels islanded in the sand-dunes of a belt of desert 25 miles wide; but our next halt, Chira, was a pleasant township positively buried in orchards. At this half-way house between Khotan and Keriya we were met by the British Aqsaqal of the latter district, a charming, courtly Afghan of great local prestige and considerable substance called Ghulam Muhammad, who insisted on our staying in a comfortable house belonging to his Turki wife, a Chira lady. Next day, near Domoko, an amusing and instructive little incident occurred. We were hacking peacefully along with Murad Qari and a couple of orderlies, when we noticed a crowd of people in the fields a couple of hundred yards from the road, and thought we would go and see what was happening.

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

Sunset in September 12,000 feet up—must have been freezing hard. Of course the oil froze and clogged your bolt. Wonder the rifle went off at all."

We were surprised to find a family of "Sarts" or ordinary Turkis sharing this small valley with the Kirghiz. Coming down from the ibex-ground one day I overtook them trekking down from their summer grazings, a pretty sight. On the opposite side of the stream a lean-visaged Sart shepherded a couple of hundred sheep and goats up an almost perpendicular cliff and along narrow ledges literally overhanging the torrent; this was necessary because the current was too strong for short-legged muttons to cross. Behind, a quaint procession came filing down the track and splashed across the stream; half a dozen mares with their foals, a man and two boys perched on masses of bedding on top of ponies, a neat smiling Sart woman with her baby and another man leading a camel piled high with the framework and felts of the family mansion.

Descending to the plains once more, we camped two glorious days on wide meadows near the long yellow loess bluffs of the Taushkan River. A hundred and fifty miles of the snowy Mountains of Heaven sparkled in the sky to west and north and north-east of us. It was advisable to give the baggage ponies (we had hired new ones at Uch Turfan) and our own animals a day or two in clover before the next lap of our journey; for we were to march 164 miles across the southern face of the Central Tien Shan and down the lower Muzart Valley to Bai on the Kucha road.

We were sorry to leave the Uch Turfan neighbourhood and the lovely valley of the "Hare River." We found the people delightful and quite unspoilt, especially the women. The latter, poor dears, seemed to be even more at a discount than at Kashgar; not one in five appeared to have a husband to herself, and they complained bitterly to D. of their hard lot. They came in streams to our camp among the meadows to "salaam" D. and beg medicines for blind, crippled, tuberculous and otherwise incurable relations. And not one of them came empty-handed. All tried to pay D. for her medicine or advice in peaches, eggs, melons, cream, corn-cobs or some such agricultural product. And when she not only made them take back most of their "widow's mites" but distributed (as she always did wherever we went) little presents of buttons, imitation jewellery, safety-pins, pieces of muslin, beads and

[The Yangi Art Jilga — Analyst]

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

by a troop of cavalry at a smart amble; it was the Commandant of the Garrison, also coming to see me off. The carriers tried to turn the ponies back, but D.'s patience had long been exhausted and she would have none of it; urged by her cries the ponies and our mounted servants charged down the lane and after a short tussle bore back the Commandant's carriage, escort and all, out into the dusty high-road. Fortunately the gallant officer was too much under the influence of opium to be quite aware of what was happening; fortunately also, no other dignitaries came to see me off and I escaped an hour later after the most cordial adieux.

D. had quite recovered her equanimity when I caught her up after a sharp ten miles' canter. She had been lucky enough to witness a most picturesque spectacle on the road. A caravan of some two hundred camels carrying raw wool from Kucha to Kashgar happened to leave Aqsu the same morning as ourselves and to be crossing the Qum Ariq River just as D. overtook it. The huge, shaggy animals with their bulky loads were tied in strings of eight, each string as usual led by a man on a donkey [1] and the whole caravan chiming with a regular carillon of bells. At the ford the Qum Ariq runs in four broad channels of varying depth; it was as good as a play, D. said, to watch the strings of camels, each guided by a yelling carrier perched on the top of the leading animal's load, zigzagging painfully across one channel after another. The donkeys, cool and sensible as ever (nobody who has travelled in the Lands of the Sun makes the mistake of thinking the donkey a stupid animal) swam across by themselves without fuss, while the big fierce-looking Kalmuck watch-dogs barked furiously as they splashed around. To complete the picture, three big Chinese travelling carts coming from Maralbashi with a minor official and his household on board met the camels in mid-stream and made confusion worse confounded. I had a talk with the carriers later in the day. They told me that the wool belonged to Kucha sheep-farmers; the camels came from the Bai district, and had been hired at the rate of 8 taels (21*s.* 4*d.*) each; fifty days had been allowed them under the terms of their contract for the whole journey,

[1] Mongolian and "Bactrian" camels travel more steadily if they are led by a pony or donkey; the latter animal is more commonly used for the purpose as its pace is practically the same as a camel's. I did not notice this custom in South Persia, where the single-humped Arabian camel is used.

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

and they expected to reach Kashgar within a month from Aqsu.

For 112 miles after leaving Aqsu we traversed the perfectly flat plain to the north of the Tarim River jungles, within sight of, though not actually along, the famous "Silk Road" first organized by the Han Emperor Wu-ti in the second century B.C., for the transport of Chinese fabrics to the Far West.[1] At an average interval of 15 miles there are halting places with poky little native serais and sometimes a slightly better Chinese rest-house. Each place has a small bazaar of shanties and stalls in which the people of the settlement, or of the nearest oasis, sell food for man and beast. At Chilan, 57 miles from Aqsu, we found ourselves in Kelpin district again; we noticed here a remarkable improvement in the facial type of the people, the women being remarkably handsome with regular, almost Greek, features.

The two Chinese troopers deputed by the O.C. Aqsu to escort our caravan as far as Maralbashi caused us much innocent amusement. One of them was comparatively bright and helpful; indeed, except for the fact that he could not fire his carbine, the bolt of which was tied on with a red handkerchief, and that he never mounted his horse without the assistance of a wall at least three feet high, he was quite a useful cavalryman. He had obviously never heard a shot fired in anger; whenever I shot a bird in his presence, or even fired my gun, he became wildly excited, laughing and clapping his hands like a child. But he was at any rate alive; his brother in arms, on the other hand, was the most miserable, opium-sodden wretch I ever saw, even in the Titai's army. We stood him as long as we could, for the sake of the O.C. Aqsu's "face," but the limit was reached the night we came to Yaka Kuduk. The march from Chilan was a moderately long one, and D. and I cantered ahead in the afternoon so as to arrive before dark, expecting the caravan to come in about seven o'clock. To our discomfort, it did not arrive till half-past eight. We questioned Hafiz. "Sahib," he replied, with an apologetic grin, "it was the opium-smoking *chirik*. Last night he finished all the opium he brought with him, and this afternoon he asked us for some. We had none, and he became very angry. Just after sunset he fell off his horse, and we

[1] The Chinese military road ran along the foot of the Kelpin Tagh a few miles to the north-west of the present route (Stein, "Ruins of Desert Cathay," Vol. II, p. 427).

/The Kirghiz/

563 262 [484] When a Kirghiz travels, he brings along a few balls of qurut and supplements them with wild rhubarb and celery which he finds on the mountainsides.

[735] Bread is made in solid lumps leavened with sour milk. The poor cannot afford bread. They eat large quantities of mash. Meat is a luxury. A sheep is killed only on an important occasion, but when the hunter is successful his family enjoys game meat.

c. Clothing

563 291 The people dress in keeping with the severity of the climate. Men wear long coats padded with cotton-wool. Trousers are also padded, and tucked into the leather knee-boots. Fur caps are pulled down over the ears to protect them from the bitter cold. Leather slippers are worn inside the boots, and the boots are removed when one enters the tent.

Women's dress is similar to that of the men, except for the headgear. The women's headdress is a large turban of muslin or similar cloth, nine to twelve inches high and of corresponding thickness. For dress, men wear embroidered skullcaps surmounted by sheepskin hoods lined with wool. They also sometimes wear a conical hat with two slits at the bottom to allow the brim to turn up.

3. Custom

563 583 562 Girls are at a premium in Kirghiz society, and the father of a would-be bridegroom has to pay a handsome price for the bride in money or its equivalent in livestock (thirty to three hundred sheep and two to thirty camels). Parents betroth their

563 584 583 son when he reaches the age of six or seven, to some neighbor's daughter of about the same age. A bride price is then settled by women relatives of both families. The boy's father pays a first annual installment, and the girl's father gives the boy a shirt or coat as a token of the betrothal. Then the marriage contract is complete. If for any reason the contract is broken, the installments paid are refunded. When the agreed amount has been

563 585 [582] paid in full and the bride and groom have reached the proper age (fourteen for girls, sixteen for boys), the boy's parents invite all the neighbors to a feast and announce the marriage. The bride and groom do not attend the feast, but remain in their tents all day. There is no ceremony. The feast and announcement, known as the Nikah, constitute the wedding.

563 585 591 The bridegroom is not yet allowed to take his bride away from her home. She continues to live with her parents for two to five months, during which time her parents make and furnish a tent (aq-ai) for them. Meanwhile the boy remains at home, if it is nearby, or in a tent lent him by the girl's parents. He may

[606] go every seven or ten days and stay with the girl in her tent, but the visits must be kept secret from her father. If he appears before his father-in-law, it must be as a stranger.

4. Cultural corps

In the army, cultural work corps promoted propaganda by means of entertainment. In local dances and songs, the Cultural Work Corps of the Fifth Army (originally the Sinkiang National Army) in the summer of 1951 promoted the Party's Nationality policy and the Resist-America Aid-Korea movement in Sinkiang. They visited various villages and regularly attracted an audience of from three or four thousand to ten thousand people. The members included thirteen minority groups living in Sinkiang. Some of them went to Peking in 1953 and presented a performance of 21 acts before the audience in the capital.

The visit was returned by the Central Nationality Dancing Corps of Peking which sent a performing team of 140-odd members to Sinkiang in April, 1955 to celebrate the establishment of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. It spent more than half a year in Sinkiang and returned to Peking on November 13 after having visited ten special districts, three autonomous chou, seven counties, two state farms, three mines in Sinkiang and two cities (Lanchow and Su-chou) in Kansu. It performed 112 times before audiences of various nationalities totalling more than 439,000 people.

IV. The Methods of Propaganda.

Besides those already mentioned, the Communists are using many other methods of propaganda. Parading, signature drives, circulation of pictures and pictorial stories, large-scale welcome meetings for important personnel sent from Peking, lantern slides and movies produced by the Party and the government, theater activities such as opera, drama, dance, and concerts all have been used as means of propaganda. The public accusation meeting is another form. No matter what the main target of a particular accusation meeting may be, whether a landlord or the U.S.A., the accusation always carries out the propaganda of the day, whether it be the Resist-America Aid-Korea movement or land reform. Other kinds of meetings are equally useful. "Model Peasants Rallies," held in the main farming districts of Sinkiang are the place to promote propaganda for increasing production as well as for denouncing germ warfare.

A. Festivals

Festivals are always good opportunities for promoting propaganda. In Northwest China where most of the minority groups are followers of the Moslem religion, the Islamic festivals are used as a time to express the thoughtfulness of the Communist government. For instance, during their celebration of the three major Moslem festivals of the year, the butchery tax on beef and mutton consumed by Mohammedan communities is exempted. Further-

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

indicate. The former lies across Chinese Turkestan to the south of the Tian Shan Range, passing by Kuche and Aksu to Kashgar; the latter, cutting through the Tian Shan Range, runs along its northern side, through Urumchi to the Ili Valley and Kulja. It was this latter route that we followed.

Our cart was returned by the wheelwright fitted with splendid new wheels, the mules were rested, and all promised well for the next lap of the trail. A Chinese traveller's proverb speaks of the long journey from Suchow to Hami as 'unmitigated bitterness,' and of that which still lay before us as a medium between the 'bitter and the sweet.' Certain it was that we had reached the end of most of the brackish water oases, and we found that the plain which now lay before us was, in most places, duly supplied with springs and wells of sweet water. The three halts beyond Hami are known as 'the First, Second, and Third Stops,' and the traveller is expected to do the three stages at a pull. However, after eleven hours we only reached the second halt, and refused to go further. The first night-stage on leaving a resting-place was always particularly trying, coming as it did after a busy day of final preparations and farewell calls. There was no possibility of rest by day or by night, and at the end of twenty-four hours we were always dead beat.

'Second Halt' was an attractive place, watered by a rushing stream. The village was much larger than those south of Hami, and there were apple trees laden with nearly ripe fruit hanging over the walls of the farms. After some hours of sleep, we got up to find the courtyard invaded by a band of men travelling from their homes in Shansi to their business in Kucheng. They were all employees of a large firm, and by the terms of their agreement were allowed to visit Shansi

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

484 once in five years. An unwritten law exacts that the journey south be taken in a cart with every appearance 579 of affluence, lest fellow-townsmen should scoff and say: 'They went to "Kow Wai" to make a fortune, and have come back penniless vagrants!' A subtle appreciation of the ethics of filial piety has made it customary for the whole party when leaving home again to do so on foot, the suggestion being that every available dollar has been left with aged parents, and that the son starts out again a poor man to seek his fortune. The band was composed of eighteen youths, and one boy of fifteen who was nephew to the manager of the firm and had been entrusted by his uncle to the care of the older men. They had one donkey which carried a few bundles, and on which the lad was able to get a lift. Each one carried across his shoulder a flexible pole with a basket slung to either end, in one of which was his wadded quilt and a change of clothes, in the other a sack of flour and his bowl and chopsticks, while from the pole was also attached a little water can to carry a drink for the way. These men had tramped for over seventy days by track roads from central Shansi to the Yellow River, and from thence by the 'long grass route' to Ansi. This shortcut brought them across the north of Shensi and direct to the North-West territory, avoiding Lanchow. For several days we met them at each stage, and on the strength of being fellow-provincials we became exceedingly friendly. They told us that each man was allowed eighteen dollars (about £2) for road expenses, and by travelling very quickly and economically they were just able to do it for that amount.

486 'How did you get through Hsinghsinghsia?' we asked.

'We had return passports from the Governor when we left Kucheng last year,' they said, 'so they did not

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

When we were about one mile from the gate of Kucheng, a yell was heard, and our men hastily drew up, saying, '*Kwai che lai liao*'—the Express is coming! and in a swirl of dust, and with a wild jingle of many harness bells, three long-limbed, bony horses galloped madly past under the lash of the driver, who, having just caught sight of the town entrance, was bringing his team through the city gate and up the main street at a pace calculated to impress the populace! It was then that we saw the body of the cart was simply made of long poles lashed together, on which two passengers, clinging to the framework, were being hurled from side to side by the violence of the jolting. One glance at the 'Express' quickly satisfied us that such a mode of travel, while excellent for postal parcels, would be hideous torture to ordinary human beings if nerves formed any part of their anatomy, while some might scarcely survive the fifty-four hours of this frenzied mode of dispatch.

From Kucheng onwards it was no longer necessary to make night stages. Hot as it was, the animals stood it well, as each midday brought us to a wayside foodshop, where we were able to get something for ourselves and water for the mules, and the nights were now spent in towns of some importance. The direction of the road was south-west, as we had reached our most northerly point at Kucheng, and we were now following the line of the Tian Shan towards the dip which marks the position of Urumchi. The highest peak of this part of the Tian Shan was now coming into sight, the great Bogdo-ola—'The Mount of God'—which rises twenty thousand feet, and is seen from a great distance. This summit, with its surrounding peaks, is of a grand and rugged shape, and lends distinction to the country which would be insignificant were it not for this arresting

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

[133] 486 feature. The first night after Kucheng we slept at Tsimusa—' The City of Everlasting Trust '—and seeing a military guard at the gate we knew that an officer would shortly call for our passports. On this occasion, however, the innkeeper failed to inform the authorities of the arrival of foreigners, and when the soldiers came to demand our papers they were exceedingly angry, and threatened him with a beating if he neglected this part of his duty again. The upshot of the fuss was that the innkeeper spent the whole night in raging and cursing officials, foreigners, passports, and soldiers alike, vowing that no ' foreign devil ' should again darken his doors ! To judge by the experience of this and other journeys in Kansu and Turkestan, it is of the greatest importance that travellers' passports should be in strict order, and up-to-date. We were required to produce these documents at the most unlikely places, and sometimes they were examined both on entering and on leaving a city, as well as at the Yamen. We were thankful to quit the ' Inn of the Cursing Landlord ' at 5 a.m. and proceed on our journey towards Santai—' The Third Stage.'

133 241 The road took us for seventy *li* over grassy steppes, and for the last fifteen *li* we drove by rapid streams between fields of maize and sorgum, bordered by hedges and shaded by overhanging trees. The whole scene, apart from the nature of the crops, might have been an English rural landscape, and it warmed our hearts as we thought of the pleasures of soon wandering in English lanes and fields.

484 We were feeling the fatigue of our long journey much more severely now that we were enduring the added strain of great heat, and though the night stages were at an end, such a diary entry as : ' Rose at 2-30 a.m. and took a very heavy, hot stage,' speaks for itself.

499 The carters also were suffering from the prolonged

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

melted his hard heart, and his good opinion of us was strengthened when he came to know that we as scrupulously abstained from swine's flesh as did any follower of the prophet. 'Huda ti ren'—'People of God'—he often said, when speaking of us to bystanders. At fixed periods he would stop the cart, spread his coat, and recite his prayers. He had a remarkable capacity for finding lost property, and this no doubt accounted for the voluminous bag which always hung by his side in the cart. Once, he found a length of rope dropped by another carter; a small bundle of cotton, camel's hair, or an apple fallen from a basket on other occasions were collected. But one day he picked up a good straw hat, and his delight was so great that he celebrated the event by cutting up a melon and giving each of us a slice, after which he chuckled audibly, until we reached the next stage. Part of the time he wore the hat, but later on he slung it to the matting-cover, and this was his downfall, for at the inn a gentleman walking past stopped and stared, and then sent his servant to tell our man that this was his master's hat, and must be returned. In the early morning he was always alert, and as soon as the carts of merchandise had moved on brought a small brush from the recesses of his hold-all with which he swept up the fodder left in the troughs, and put it carefully into his bag, a satisfactory haul insuring good temper for the day. It was such proceedings that secured for him the nickname of Sandy Macnab! As we neared the end of the journey he became so friendly as to condescend to borrow our teapot, and before he left us at Chuguchak he bade us an affectionate farewell, saying: 'You are *good* people; just one family; father, brother and sisters!'

As we proceeded on our long journey, we realised how well-advised we had been in the choice of the season

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927 AF13 Northwest China
Sinkiang AI 1

during which we travelled. Earlier in the summer the Manas and other rivers constitute a real peril. The cold in Turkestan and Southern Siberia in early winter increases the hardship of the way, and when the spring thaw sets in, the roads around Urumchi are sometimes impassable for weeks, owing to mud-pits which are so extensive that no cart can negotiate them.

CHAPTER XLIII

ARRIVAL AT CHUGUCHAK

On September 2nd we sighted Hsihu. It is an important town surrounded by a considerable area of irrigated land, where was the junction of the Ili and Chuguchak main roads. The place presented the usual aspect of a central point used by farmers as a market. The streets were very countrified; nevertheless large sums of money pass from hand to hand between the grain merchants and their customers. There were the usual bazaars, fruit and vegetable vendors, and general shops where travellers might buy a pail, basin, towel, soap, or cigarettes, while herbalists showed a dusty store of rhubarb, cardamoms, liquorice, fennel, cloves, and ginger. The inns were crowded with caravans travelling to Ili, or arriving from Siberia. Knowing that even by tarantass we should not reach Chuguchak for another ten days, and that on leaving this fertile land we should pass through a barren country providing neither fruit nor vegetables, we loaded up once more with cucumbers, melons, and grapes, and late in the evening a vine-grower appeared carrying a basket of splendid fruit freshly cut, on which we all feasted for several days. A long stage of sixty miles, the latter part of which was over a sandy waste between tamarisk